

## Message Text

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R 291340Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5194

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KIGALI POUCH

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUJUMBURA 0071

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, XA

SUBJECT: REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINTS STUDY

REF STATE 20621

1. OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS BURUNDI HAS DOUBLED THE SIZE OF ITS ALL TUTSI ARMED FORCES FROM FOUR TO EIGH THOUSAND. IT HAS UPGRADED ITS MILITARY ACADEMY AND INCREASED THE NUMBER OF OFFICER-CANDIDATES IN TRAINING. A SMALL MARITIME UNIT HAS BEEN STARTED ON LAKE TANGANYIKA, AND THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO DOZEN SOLDIERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED PILOT TRAINING ABORAD. FOLLOWING THE DEPARTURE OF BELGIUM'S MILITARY ADVISORS IN 1972-3, BURUNDI NOW PLAYS HOST TO A FRENCH MILITARY MISSION AND TO A FEW EGYPTIAN TRAINING OFFICERS. HOWEVER, MOST OF ITS EXPERT PERSONNEL ARE TRAINED ABROAD IN THE USSR, SOMALIA, VARIOUS ARAB COUNTRIES, AND, OCCASIONALLY, FRANCE. BURUNDI IS CONSTANTLY TRYING TO UPGRADE THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF ITS MILITARY EQUIPMENT, WHETHER FROM ITS OWN MEAGER HARD CURRENCY RESERVES, OR FROM SPECIAL CONCESSIONAL SALES AND GRANTS FROM FOREIGN GOVERNMENT SUPPLIERS. ACCORDING TO THE PUBLISHED FIGURES OF THE REGULAR BUDGET FOR 1976, THE ARMED FORCES

HAVE NOW BECOME THE LARGEST SINGLE RECIPIENT OF GOVERNMENT ALLOCATIONS ( OVER DOLLARS NINE MILLION), AND THE ADDITIONAL  
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(THOUGH LESSER) SUMS EXPENDED THROUGH THE EXTRAORDINARY BUDGET

WOULD PROBABLY CONFIRM THIS TOP PRIORITY FOR DEFENSE.

2. BURUNDI'S DIVERSION OF SCARCE RESOURCES TO THE MILITARY, WHILE OBJECTIVELY REGRETTABLE FOR SUCH A DESPERATELY POOR COUNTRY, MAKES EMINENTLY GOOD SENSE TO THE LEADERS OF THE REGIME IN POWER. WITH AN ARMY OFFICER AS PRESIDENT, AND WITH SENIOR ARMY PERSONNEL SUPPLYING THE BACK BONE OF REGIME SUPPORT, THERE IS A NATURAL GOVERNMENTAL PREDISPOSITION TO KEEP THE MILITARY HAPPY. IN ADDITION, THE POLITICAL CLOUT OF THE ARMED FORCES LEADS TO REGIME JUDGEMENTS WHICH PLACE EXCEPTIONAL EMPHASIS ON "SECURITY". ABOVE ALL, HOWEVER, EXPENDITURES ON THE ARMED FORCES REFLECT THE ELITE'S PREOCCUPATION WITH MAINTAINING ITS MINORITY TUTSI REGIME IN POWER. SINCE THE ATTEMPTED HUTU REVOLT OF 1972 AND THE SUBSEQUENT INTERNAL DISORDER IN BURUNDI UNDERScoreD THE SIZE OF THE POTENTIAL DOMESTIC THREAT TO THE REGIME, THE GOVERNMENT'S (OVERDRAWN) REACTION HAS BEEN TO PILE UP WHAT ARMS IT CAN. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS HIGHLY CONSCIOUS OF THE UNCERTAIN SECURITY SITUATION IN NEIGHBORING EASTERN ZAIRE (WHICH MIGHT SPILL OVER INTO BURUNDI) AND OF POSSIBLE FUTURE HOSTILITY FROM TANZANIA, RWANDA, IF THE PRESENT RELATIVELY FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS OF THOSE COUNTRIES WERE TO BE OVERTURNED. THUS THE PERCEPTION OF UNLATENT EXTERNAL DANGER IS ALSO OMNIPRESENT IN BURUNDI, AND FEARS OF TROUBLE INSPIRED FROM ABROAD BY HUTU REFUGEES REMAIN ANOTHER DISQUIETING FACTOR.

3. GIVEN THESE CONCERNS OF TOP REGIME PERSONNEL ABOUT THEIR OWN ETHNIC SURVIVAL (AS TUTSI RULERS) AND ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO REPEL ATTACKS FROM ABROAD AND TO MAINTAIN DOMESTIC ORDER, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE INTERESTED IN REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS. NOT ONLY COULD NONE OF THESE PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY SUBSTITUTE IN SECURITY TERMS FOR THE UNILATERAL MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS WHICH THE REGIME MAKES FOR ITSELF, BUT BURUNDI'S ARMS BUILDUP REALLY HAS LITTLE OR NOTHIN TO DO WITH ANY BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL ARMS-RACE RIVALRIES IN THIS REGION. RATHER, IT FEELS THAT IT MUST DEPEND ON ITSELF FOR SECURITY, SINCE IT HAS NO GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE STABILITY OF ITS NEIGHBORS, AND SINCE THE BURUNDI ARMY HAS A SEPARATE INTERNAL SECURITY FUNCTION IN ANY CASE.

4. AS IT IS, THE ONLY REAL RESTRAINT IS BUDGETARY, INASMUCH AS BURUNDI'S TOTAL GNP IS SO SMALL THAT THE REGIME MUST,  
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HOWEVER RELUCTANTLY, IMPOSE PRECISE LIMITS ON THE GROWTH OF THE ARMED FORCES, LEST THEIR CONSUMPTION OF RESOURCES WRECK THE NATIONAL ECONOMY ALTOGETHER. THEN THE LIMITS ON THE USE OF INTERNALLY GENERATED FUNDS ARE REACHED, THE REGIME TRIES TO GET FREEHRAINING AND FREE EQUIPMENT FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES WILLING TO SUPPORT IT. EXCEPT FOR FRANCE, SUCH BACKERS ARE NOW ALMOST ENURZLQ# FROM "PROGRESSIVE" COUNTRIES. STILL, THEIR LARGESSE IS RESTRAINED--FOR EXAMPLE, BOTH THE FRENCH AND THE SOVIETS HAVE

APPARENTLY REFUSED IN THE LAST EIGHT MONTHS TO SUPPLY JET FIGHTER AIRCRAFT TO BURUNDI. NONETHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TRYING TO GET THE MOST SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS WHICH IT CAN HOPE TO AFFORD, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN.

5. GIVEN THE ADAMANCY OF BURUNDI IN PURSUING ITS MILITARY BUILDUP, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT COULD PERSUADE IT TO ACCEDE TO ARMS LIMITATION ARRANGEMENTS. NO OUTSIDE ARRANGEMENT, INCLUDING ONE SPONSORED BY THE OAU, COULD PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT'S PECULIAR CONCERNS. CERTAINLY THE UNITED STATES COULD EXERCISE NO INFLUENCE TOWARDS ARMS LIMITATION. WE WOULD DEFINITELY NOT WANT TO GIVE SECURITY ASSURANCES TO THIS REGIME IN ANY EVENT, WHETHER IN A BILATERAL OR MULTINATIONAL CONTEXT, BUT EVEN IF WE WERE HYPOTHETICALLY SO PREPARED, OUR CREDIBILITY AS A SUPPORTER WOULD BE MINIMAL, GIVEN BOTH OUR DISENGAGEMENT FROM THIS PART OF AFRICA IN MILITARY MATTERS AND THE CURRENT RECORD OF OUR INABILITY TO GENERATE ADEQUATE AMERICAN INTERNAL SUPPORT FOR OPERATIONS AGAINST SOVIET-CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN ANGOLA. AS FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES TO ARMS RESTRAINT, THE MOTIVES PROMPTING THE BURUNDI REGIME TO PLOW EVER MORE FUNDS INTO ITS ARMED FORCES COULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY OFFERS OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, SINCE BURUNDI'S SECURITY CONCERNS GROW OUT OF QUITE DIFFERENT CONSIDERATIONS AND ARE MUCH MORE PRIMORDIAL FOR THE TUTSI RULERS THAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

6. IF IT IS ANY CONSOLATION, THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT BURUNDI WOULD EVER CHOOSE TO USE ITS ARMED FORCES IN AN AGGRESSIVE WAY AGAINST ITS NEIGHBORS, AND, AS NOTED, THE BUILDUP IS LESS DIRDCTED AGAINST THE ARMIES OF CONTIGUOUS

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

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COUNTRIES THAN AGAINST POSSIBLE SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS AT HOME. BURUNDI'S MILITARY EXPANSION IN THE LAST FEW YEARS HAS NOT BEEN FUELED BY RIVALRIES WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, BUT RATHER BY REGIME VIEWS OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ITS OWN SELF PRESERVATION. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, ONLY DOMESTIC BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS AND NEGATIVE DECISIONS BY OUTSIDE SUPPLIERS HAVE ANY CHANCE OF HOLDING DOWN THE SIZE AND QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT OF BURUNDI'S ARMED FORCES. IN FACT, THE BUDGET, REFLECTING BURUNDI'S LOW GNP AND PRIMITIVE PUBLIC FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, WILL PROVE A DECISIVE ELEMENT IN THIS REGARD. MOREOVER, WHILE IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THE VARIOUS OUTSIDE SUPPLIERS OF ARMS TO BURUNDI WOULD EVER BE WILLING TO GET TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF RESTRAINT AMONG THEMSELVES, MUCH LESS TO TAKE JOINT ACTION, EACH HAS A RELATIVELY LOW LOIT OF ENTHUSIASM FOR HELPING BURUNDI'S MILITARY IN THE FACE OF MANY COMPETING EXTERNAL DEMANDS. STILL, POLITICAL RIVALRIES AMONG SUPPLIERS WILL GIVE THE REGIME SOME LEVERAGE. JUST AS THE FRENCH APPEARED ON THE SCENE WHEN BELGIUM PULLED OUT MILITARILY IN 1973, SO WOULD OTHER POTENTIAL MILITARY BACKERS PROBABLY BE FOUND IN THE WINGS IF ONE OR MORE PRESENT SUPPLIERS WERE TO REDUCE THEIR MILITARY AID DRASTICALLY. IN ANY CASE, THE LOCAL FRENCH DO ALREADY ARGUE VIGOROUSLY THAT FOR THEM TO CUT BACK SEVERELY ON AID TO BURUDNI'S ARMED FORCES NOW WOULD ONLY BE TO OPEN THE DOOR TO CHINA, WHICH IN THEIR VIEW, IS SEEKING A SORT OF HEGEMONY IN EAST AFRICA.

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7. OBVIOUSLY, THERE ARE BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL SITUATIONS IN AFRICA WHER ARMS RACE IS ENCOURAGED BY THE INTERPLAY OF RIVALRIES AMONG NEARBY COUNTRIES. PERHAPS,IN THOSE PLACES, THERE MAYBE HOPE FOR SOME TYPE OF ARMS CONTROL OR RESTRAINT IN MILITARY TRANSFERS. HOWEVER, BURUNDI'S CASE IS RATHER DIFFERENT AND, FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, THE REGIME WILL NOT BE INTERESTED IN ANY FORM OF ARMS LIMITATION, NO MATTER WHICH FOREIGN COUNTRY OR OUTSIDE AGENCY IS THE SPONSOR. FORTUNATELY, THIS NEGATIVE OUTLOOK HERE HAS NO SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS FOR AMERICAN INTERESTS.  
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